



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 1-April 15, 2011



Official opening ceremony of Sardara Road Graveling Project in Sari Pul Province. PHOTO: USAID/CBSG

STABILIZATION

Opening Ceremonies of Sardara and Fiazabad Road Graveling Projects:

On April 7, the Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project celebrated the completion of two 5-kilometer road graveling projects in Kuhestanat District, Sari Pul Province. Representatives from the district governor's office, the Provincial Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Community Development Council, the CBSG project, and community elders attended the opening ceremonies.

Lack of proper roads had limited Sardara and Fiazabad residents from accessing basic government services. Additionally, the bad condition of the road prevented national and international security forces from patrolling

the area. The newly graveled roads connect more than 10 villages to the Kuhestanat District center, where citizens can access government services.

Kuhestanat is one of the most insecure districts of Sari Pul Province, and the lack of roads severely limited the ability of the Afghanistan government to address community needs. The successful completion of these two projects will enable Afghanistan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Forces to secure the area, and bring the community closer to basic services provided by the local government.

Abdul Haq Khan Village Works with Kandahar Sub-District Seven Manager for Road Improvements:

According to local elders in the Sub-District Seven of Kandahar City, a lack of development support has discouraged cooperation between the local people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). In late 2010, community representatives of Abdul Haq Khan Village requested development assistance from the Kandahar City municipality through the community-appointed wakil.



The Abdul Haq Khan representatives sign the grant in the Sub-District Seven Manager's Office. PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

The Sub-District Seven Manager facilitated a meeting between community representatives and the representatives from USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project. USAID's LGCD staff worked with the Sub-District Manager and the community representatives to develop a community stabilization grant (CSG), which funded leveling, grading, and compaction of 2,000 meters of the main road. The activity was finished this week, after generating approximately 431 man-days of labor for local residents.



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Through the grant process, residents of Abdul Haq Khan Village renewed their link with GIRoA and received a tangible demonstration of the municipality's capacity to provide targeted service delivery in response to expressed priority needs. The activity is part of LGCD's ongoing CSG project in support of Hamkari de Kandahar Lepara, GIRoA's plan to build stability in Kandahar City through improved local governance.



Furniture provided to Yaghal Girl's School in Baghlan. PHOTO: USAID/CBSG

School Furniture Provision Project Closed: On April 11, USAID's Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project celebrated the completion of a school furniture procurement project for the Yaghal Girls' High School in Guzargah-e-Noor District of Baghlan Province. The acting governor, the director of the Provincial Line Department of Education, members of the Community Development Council (CDC), community elders, religious leaders, teachers, students, and representatives of the CBSG project attended the ceremony.

In his speech, the acting governor thanked USAID for the financial support and efforts to make the implementation of the project happen successfully. He added that the donation will certainly change the learning environment

for both students and teachers and contribute to reducing the illiteracy rate.

Guzargah-e-Noor is a remote and insecure district of Baghlan Province, where insurgent groups disturb the stability and create barriers to the implementation of projects. The school, constructed jointly by the Afghan Ministry of Education and the local people, recently graduated its first class of students. Community members identified the school's lack of adequate furniture as a significant community grievance. Implementation of the furniture project through joint collaboration under financial assistance from USAID, will not only improve the learning environment at the school, but will also help to bridge the gap between the community and the local government by improving the image of the line department of education in Guzargah-e-Noor District of Baghlan Province.

USAID Project Completed Rehabilitation of Gorgorak Canal: Through its Community Development Program, USAID completed rehabilitating 17 kilometers of the Gorgorak canal in Dandi Ghor District. Gorgorak is one of Baghlan Province's major canals, irrigating more than 10,000 jeribs of agricultural land. However, the canal had fallen into disrepair, resulting in poor irrigation of thousands of jeribs of land. The situation was further complicated by the canal's location in an insecure area of the district.



Rehabilitated canal in Dandi Ghor District, Baghlan Province. PHOTO: USAID/CDP



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Following recent clearing operations, the irrigation department and six local community development councils requested USAID assistance to address this community grievance. This canal rehabilitation became the first development project implemented in the area after the end of clearing operations. The community contributed to the project by providing free labor to clean 50 percent of the canal. USAID hired and paid local men to complete the other 50 percent. In total, rehabilitation of the canal created short-term employment for 100 local men and will benefit more than 2,000 families through improved agricultural production and household income.



Carpet design software training course. PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Afghan Companies Complete a Carpet Design Training Program:

Twenty of Afghanistan's major carpet production companies recently completed a 10-day carpet design training program, sponsored by the Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development project. The training, which took place at the Afghanistan Technical and Vocational Institute in Kabul, provided the designer with instructions on use of the Booria Carpet Designer software. The software has flexible and comprehensive drawing tools with a great range of functions and features to increase design productivity and will enable carpet companies to adapt commissioned designs for weaving with a much faster turnaround time,

allowing them to process more orders in a shorter period of time for foreign buyers. The USAID-sponsored training was designed to assist carpet producing companies to transition from the time-consuming process of replicating hand-drawn carpet designs to using computerized designing software. At the end of training, each carpet company received a licensed copy of the software.

TAFa Conducted Seminar in Parwan Province: On April 9, USAID's Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAFa) project, working closely with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), conducted a seminar in Parwan Province on issues related to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Participants included officials from MOCI, the Ministry of Information and Culture, Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, private-sector business leaders and Parwan-based professional staff. The seminar served to build participants' understanding of WTO and TRIPS related issues, specifically due process legal requirements, the role of the private sector, the need for legal reform to comply with WTO standards, and the benefits Afghan traders can expect.



Participants in USAID-led WTO/TRIPS training seminar. PHOTO: USAID/TAFa



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Kandahar trainers work in groups, practicing active teaching methods that will be passed on to primary school teachers beginning in April. PHOTO: USAID/BESST

EDUCATION

Hundreds of Trainers Prepared to Deliver Workshops for Primary School Teachers: In late March 2011, USAID's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers project completed training of around 850 district-based trainers for the third round of in-service teacher training. This training workshop enabled trainers to deliver the same training to an estimated 20,000 primary school teachers in all districts of 11 provinces beginning in early April 2011. The workshop gives early grade teachers new skills and approaches to teach reading, writing, and basic math. Trainers were shown early activities, games, and strategies that teachers can use in low-resource classrooms.

In a country where one out of every five teachers has below a 12th grade education and rote teaching styles are still prevalent, this type of training is expected to bring fundamental improvements to the quality of teaching in schools.

In-service training provided to 5,000 School Managers in 11 Provinces: In order to promote the improvement of education in Afghanistan, USAID works to build capacity of principals and others in leadership positions in public schools. USAID's Building Education Support System for Teachers project and the Ministry of Education (MoE) have worked together to design national in-service training programs for school managers.

Since January, USAID provided eight-day workshops for around 5,000 school managers in 11 provinces. The interactive workshops cover topics such as communicating with parents and garnering community support for schools; creating a community learning environment in the school; supporting professional growth for teachers; encouraging teamwork to solve problems and improve performance; making a daily work plan and prioritizing tasks; and learning and practicing various MoE administrative procedures. School managers received the training handbook as a practical guide they can reference while on the job.



Principals, deputy principals and head teachers of Nangarhar schools attended School Management Training. PHOTO: USAID/BESST

"Before, I did not know how to make a work plan. Now I can plan daily tasks and base my priorities on school priorities. Overall, I found the training really very effective. I have learned a lot about how I can do my job better," said the head teacher of a middle school in Dar-e-Noor District, Nangarhar Province.



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DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE



The Arghandab District Governor presents elders with ledgers to record disputes to enhance formal/informal justice collaboration, April 2011.
PHOTO: USAID/RLS-I

Arghandab District Governor and Village Elders Unite in the Pursuit of Local Justice: Arghandab District in Kandahar Province, is home to a fiercely proud and close knit farming community, however, in recent years it has become better known as a place of violent conflict for competing insurgents. In order to support stabilization in this war torn land, the USAID Rule of Law Stabilization Informal Sector (RLS-I) program has worked with village elders and state justice actors to enhance the quality of local justice mechanisms and in turn improve community access to justice.

This has been achieved through formal training of elders and local justice actors in all ranges of Afghan law, along with the creation of elder and state actor meetings and networks. As a result of these activities, elders joined

with Arghandab District Governor Shah Mohammad Khan and other local state justice actors, to design dispute resolution ledgers for elders to record their decisions and register these with the district governor and Huqoq offices. In addition, elders now know which disputes to refer to state justice actors, and the district governor has also formalized the role of elders in alternative dispute resolution by publicly referring to disputes and disputants he believes will be better served by the elders dispute resolution process. inter-family violence.

“After attending RLS-I activities, elders understand they must be neutral in politics, in their roles as community elders, and as mediators. They have developed good unity among themselves because they now understand they must be responsible to work together to resolve disputes and bring peace for the benefit of everyone in our community,” said an Arghandab RLS-I network elder.

Training Village Elders in Afghan Laws Reduces Local Conflict: On April 3, 42 elders from Behsood, Surkh Rod, Qarghaee, and Kuz Kunar travelled to Jalalabad City to attend a one-day USAID Rule of Law Stabilization-Informal Component (RLS-I) Program workshop on property deeds, lease agreements, power of attorney, authority letters, and marriage certificates. This training was delivered by respected local justice advisers and Nangarhar Judges Moosa Khan “Shinwari” and Habibullah.



Property Deeds Workshop, attended by 42 district elders from Nangarhar and Laghman, April 3, 2011.
PHOTO: USAID/RLS-I

Elder Raees Khan said, “I have attended many seminars, but I have never seen such an effective program as the property deeds seminar. We learned many things regarding deeds, but more importantly, we discussed many of the disputes we face in our villages every day and found solutions to these disputes.”



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Most provincial communities seek the advice of locally known and trusted elders to resolve disputes they do not want to take to courts, for the sake of expediency or privacy. However, over the years, with changes in government and local power brokers, elders have lost some of their legitimacy in resolving disputes, and disputants have been more inclined to "shop around for decisions" leading to the protraction of disputes which sometimes escalate into family or tribal violence. To address this issue the USAID RLS-I program is working with elders to strengthen local justice and dispute resolution by providing training in Afghan law and mediation techniques.



Arghandab women request USAID RLS-I support to establish a women's dispute resolution group; known locally as a *Spinsary Group*. PHOTO: USAID/RLS-I

Womens Dispute Resolution Groups Embraced by Elders in Kandahar and Nangarhar:

On April 11, in Arghandab, 33 senior women and wives of elders attended a one-day discussion session on domestic dispute prevention and resolution. At this workshop they also discussed ways for increasing women's role in, and access to local justice and determined to establish Kandahar's first women's dispute resolution group (*Spinsary Group*).

Traditionally women in Kandahar have limited access to the public sphere, let alone *jirga* meetings or justice systems. Community dispute resolution is generally regarded as the domain of male elders. However, women

have played constructive roles in dispute resolution, but usually in the confines of the home, or in a domestic context.

Consequently, USAID's Rule of Law Stabilization – Informal Component (RLS-I) began working with male elders and women to identify ways to use women's dispute resolution potential for the benefit of their local communities. RLS-I has already established six *Spinsary Groups* in Nangarhar. Each group has six respected women elders and has been well accepted in their communities, resolving over 26 significant and often violent disputes in that time.